United Nations A/AC.154/366

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 May 2006

Original: English

Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 10 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

I have the honour to address you in your capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, attaching a note verbale dated 10 May 2006, addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations (see annex).

I also have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, on 17 May 2006, of an item with regard to the travel restrictions imposed by the host country on some Permanent Missions to the United Nations, including the Permanent Mission of Cuba.

I would appreciate your distributing this letter and the attached note verbale as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Diaz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

06-34774 (E) 120506

Annex to the letter dated 10 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

[Original: English and Spanish]

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and wishes to convey its deep concern at the fact that the authorities of the host country have denied the request submitted by Mr. Rodolfo E. Benitez Verson, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Cuba, to travel beyond the 25-mile radius from Columbus Circle, in the Headquarters district, in order to participate from 1 to 4 May 2006 in the Seminar organized by the International Peace Academy at the Thayer Hotel, West Point, New York, on the theme "The Middle East on the Global Agenda: Issues, Tendencies and Links".

This important seminar, as was announced by its organizers in a timely fashion, was designed to address the needs and interests of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations and promote professional development in the area of peace and security. For that reason, 40 diplomats of the Permanent Missions were selected to participate, including the Cuba Mission. Only the Cuban diplomat could not attend, due to the denial by the United States authorities.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba reiterates that the denials of travel permits requested by officials of the Permanent Mission of Cuba, as has just been the case of Mr. Benitez Verson, and the usual practice of the authorities of the host country of not providing any explanation, violate the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations and the host country, as well as the provisions of the international legal instruments on diplomatic prerogatives and immunities to which the United States is a State party. Likewise, they are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in Their Relations with International Organizations.

Moreover, the limitations and restrictions of movement beyond the 25-mile radius, which arbitrarily and for political reasons are imposed by the host country on the personnel of the Permanent Mission of Cuba, are clearly contrary to the provisions of the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

These limitations and restrictions, which are applied in a discriminatory manner, interfere with the proper functioning of the Permanent Mission of Cuba and hinder its regular work.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba urges once more the authorities of the host country to take the necessary steps to meet the international obligations agreed to by its Government and the recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United States Permanent Mission to the United Nations the assurances of its most distinguished consideration.

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15 May 2006

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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 15 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

I have the honour to enclose a note verbale dated 15 May 2006 from the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations as a response to the latter's note verbale dated 10 May 2006 (see annex). I request that you circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) John R. **Bolton**

06-34927 (E) 160506

Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations and wishes to refer to the latter's note verbale No. 363 of 10 May 2006, regarding the denial of the request of Counsellor Rodolfo Benitez Verson to travel to West Point, New York, in order to participate in a four-day seminar held by the International Peace Academy.

Consistent with its responsibilities as the host country to the United Nations and the Missions accredited to it, the United States does not restrict travel within the United States if that travel is for official United Nations business. After careful consideration, the decision to deny Mr. Benitez's travel in this particular instance was made because the travel was not for official United Nations business. The International Peace Academy is not a part of the United Nations system. The Academy describes itself as "an independent, international institution dedicated to promoting the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts" in a manner "free from official constraints". The United States' decision thus does not violate the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement between the United States and the United Nations, nor does it violate any other relevant obligation of the host country under international law.